United Nations A/68/862

General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 May 2014

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Agenda item 19
Sustainable development

Letter dated 22 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to attach information on the activities of the Republic of Kazakhstan with regard to the improvement of the environmental and socioeconomic situation in the Aral Sea region (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 19.

(*Signed*) Kairat **Abdrakhmanov**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

14-31966 (E) 060514 070514

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 22 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Information on the activities of Kazakhstan with regard to the improvement of the environmental and socioeconomic situation in the Aral Sea region

The Republic of Kazakhstan is carrying out a significant amount of work to improve the environmental and socioeconomic situation in the Aral Sea region. Over $2.7 billion has been allocated for that purpose.

In the late twentieth century, the Kazakh part of the Aral Sea region was declared an ecological disaster zone. In 1992 Kazakhstan adopted an Act on the social protection of citizens suffering from the effects of the ecological disaster in the Aral Sea region. Local residents were provided with compensation and social benefits by law.

With the support and cooperation of the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United States Agency for International Development and other international organizations and foreign States, a number of projects aimed at tackling environmental issues and fostering socioeconomic development have been carried out in the Kazakh part of the Aral Sea basin.

Programmes to address the problems of the Aral Sea region through a comprehensive approach were implemented in 2004-2006 and 2007-2009 with allocations of $380 million from the national budget.

Phase 1 of a large-scale national project on Syrdarya River control and northern Aral Sea conservation was carried out in the Kazakh part of the Aral Sea region as part of the Aral Sea Basin Programme at a cost of over $100 million. The project resulted in the construction of the Kok-Aral dam, the doubling of the capacity of the Syrdarya River, a rise in the volume of water in the Northern Aral from 15.6 to 26.7 m^3 and an increase in the reservoir area from 2,414 to 3,262 km^2. Conditions were established that have enabled the breeding and catching of valuable species of fish and biodiversity has been restored. In cooperation with the World Bank, work is under way to prepare for the implementation of phase 2 of the Syrdarya River control and northern Aral Sea conservation project at an approximate cost of $195 million.

Thanks to sector programmes carried out in 2002-2011, around 200 km of the water distribution network have been built or reconstructed in the Aral Sea region in order to provide the population with a steady supply of high-quality drinking water, and over 20 educational facilities and an equivalent number of health care facilities have been built. By 2013, aqueducts totalling 270 km in length were in operation and over 100 public schools and kindergartens and 50 hospitals, polyclinics, outpatient facilities and midwifery clinics were under construction or being refurbished.

Projects have also been implemented to build flood prevention dams, deliver clean drinking water to populations in remote localities, carry out forest reclamation, increase the area of the Barsa-Kelmes Nature Reserve, refill dried-up lakes in the Syrdarya River delta, and irrigate pastures and hayfields.

Implementation of Phase 3 of the Aral Sea Basin Programme, the programme to prevent desertification in the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2005-2015, and other sector programmes is under way.

In 2013 Kazakhstan also held a series of major conferences, seminars, training sessions, round tables and other important social events timed to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.